

11 CUSTOMER COLLABORATION OVER CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

11.1 BUSINESS PEOPLE AND DEVELOPERS MUST WORK TOGETHER

This section discusses the Agile principle ‘Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.’

In today’s complex knowledge-based IT-driven world, no single delivery discipline (e.g. analyst, coder, designer) can be successful working on their own. To achieve successful product delivery, collaboration is essential.

Collaboration delivers the following benefits:

- Teams can understand the evolving vision of the business, allowing them to continually assess whether the goal of a time-box is still aligned to the business need and is still deliverable within the time-box.
- The customer can effectively communicate the evolving team approach back to the rest of the business. The resulting trust relationship between the business and the team is a huge enabler for collaborative Agile delivery. If ongoing communication is not maintained between the team and the business, or the team does not deliver value to the business continuously, it is likely to lead to concerns about delivery and possibly even micromanagement. This can cause interruptions (noise) that may significantly reduce the productivity of the team or even fundamentally derail the delivery.
- Business people and the team can agree on an accurate solution to problems. This collaboration must be continuous (at least daily) rather than being limited to infrequent occasions such as planning sessions.
- Business people can answer team questions as they arise and vice versa. Business people tend to have a vast amount of knowledge of the required business system that the product supports, while the team are experts in the technologies available to develop and implement products. This interchange increases the effectiveness of the knowledge discovery process, shortens feedback loops and dramatically reduces the likelihood of delivering the wrong functionality due to misinterpretation of requirements and so increases efficiency.
- As the customer signs off individual stories as ‘done’ as they become available, they need to interact with the team throughout the delivery time-box. This enables everyone to effectively track progress based on actual delivery of working software within the time-box, with the inherent associated benefits.

11.2 REFLECT AND ADJUST (INSPECT AND ADAPT) REGULARLY

This section discusses the Agile principle ‘At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behaviour accordingly.’

The three foundations of Agile as an empirical process are inspection, adaptation and transparency (see [Section 2.6](#)). The inspection and adaptation cycle allows for an accurate product to be delivered within a time-box; it also helps to define and evolve team processes and the continual improvement (Kaizen) that a team implements.

In more traditional delivery approaches there is sometimes a ‘lessons learned’ process at the end of a release or at the end of a project. In contrast, the majority of Agile frameworks include regular reflection and adjustment points during the ongoing delivery of the product. These reflection and adjustment points can occur at the end of a time-box, or within the time-box. Wherever they are placed they must be regular, with regular meaning at the least at the boundaries of every sprint/iteration time-box (every 2 to 4 weeks).